

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

VOLUME II Number I

September 25, 1970

Chicago, Illinois

An Educational Group

It is with mixed interest that we watch the three groups attempting to organize local ballet companies. All three involve Stone Camryn alumni and all three have different points of view in their organizing of a company.

The first to do anything - the Milwaukee Ballet Company began from the efforts of ROBERTA REHBERG and I believe BONNIE LARSON. At the moment they are rehearsing on their second production - "Coppelia".

The Mid-American group began when we brought BILL REILLY and RUTH KOESUN together for a Stone Camryn performance at the Alverne High School in Milwaukee last December. This group, still in the talking stag, promises a performance sometime this fall or winter.

The Rushford group which hopes to make use of the Lyric Opera has thrown up JOHN NEUMEIER'S name as its main attraction. John has done brilliantly with his career in Europe and should think very seriously before "what he has" is tossed away for "what he might have" in Chicago. The Lyric Opera has done little in the past to further ballet in our city.

Do we need, yet another Ballet Company here?

If there were one, what should be its purpose?

These are questions that are asked us constantly and are difficult to answer. My experience in Chicago covers 43 years and during this time I have seen many talented dancers wasted on the local scene. Local critics and the public have always opposed and derided local attempts. The area has produced many fabulous dancers who have gone away and had success in other

parts of the world. When the public has forgotten that they are local, they can come back with success - maybe this is the way it should be.

The present efforts for a local company are by no means the first. There have been many in the past. Ruth Page over a long period of time did a tremendous amount of pioneering. She had a large local company which rarely could play Chicago. The largest effort in the past was under Laurent Novikoff with the Chicago Civic Opera Company.

It should seem, considering the number of Ballet companies afloat, that another one using dancers from New York that we have all seen in a half dozen companies is not needed. What is needed is a company that trains its own dancers and their stars come up through its ranks, as Ballet Theatre once did and does no longer. Naturally, this kind of a company needs one or several creative people in its ranks. This sort of company must ignore critics and make haste slowly. It also needs a master teacher to give the company a unified style. It needs enthusiastic supporters - not socialites - who are willing to excuse the failures as well as adore its successes. It certainly needs to realize that no lasting success starts at the top, one must build.

I would say that what local dancers need most is a place to gain experience. A company with a varied repertoire and excluding the Classics. If they do not get it here, they must, as they have in the past, go elsewhere. As where did Ruth Ann Koesun, Bill Reilly and John Neumeier get their experience? Our own Stone Camryn programs have always been based on this premise and has started many on their careers.

TEMPLES, CASTLES and MONUMENTS

This was our year to tour the American Temples, Castles and Monuments, many as old as 400 million years. The difference with those we saw in Europe was that they were man made and ours are made by nature. She has created massive architecture through erosion, by wind, by water and rock crushing vegetation. For me, comprehending the Grand Canyon is as baffling as trying to understand outer space. Geologists, all have their theories which sound plausible and no doubt are but the time element running into millions and millions of years is what staggers the imagination. These masterpieces of nature's architecture are awesome and strikingly colorful, holding you spellbound with a deep feeling of humility for the human race.

For one to see, really see, the Grand Canyon, one would have to spend weeks there. How can one see in a few days what has taken so long for nature to create? One receives merely an impression, but what a tremendous one. Our vacation began here and we did not take any of the daring exhausting trips down into the deep gorge of the canyon. Instead, I will be satisfied to look at the superb photographs of David Meunch. I simply could not do justice to the entire canyon with my trusty Argus. As to describing or understanding it, one must read Joseph Wood Krutch's book called "Grand Canyon". We stayed at the Bright Angel Lodge in a rim-side cabin, perfect but for the large gatherings of Hippies that "took over" every public area. From Bright Angel, there were many interesting and beautiful trails where one could get spectacular views. On these walks you may enjoy the fragrant Cliff-rose shrubs the globe mallow and the Carmine thistle along the trail side. Chattering to you from the trees while feeding on berries would be tauany colored Say's Phoebes, or deep blue Stellar's Jays and lizards scamper across the path in front of you.

Of the millions visiting the Canyon, a great percentage of them are from foreign countries. On a tour we took, there were people from Germany, Holland, France, Australia, South America, Japan, Korea, Lebanon and Israel. What was apparent to me was that most of these foreign people spoke better English than Americans do, who, with their various dialects and slang are difficult to understand. Americans seem to lack a refinement for language that other nationalities seem to have and respect. They were also better informed on the Canyon itself and fully realized what they were seeing.

From the Canyon, our flight to Cedar city took us directly over the Painted Desert which we had had a glimpse of from a distance on one of the Canyon tours. From the air one can really see its delicate, lacelike patterns caused by water drainage. Its infinite variety of pastel colors in circular swirls, feather-edge lines and leaf-like designs all flowed from small gulleys into the beginnings of smaller canyons. Near Page, Utah, we flew over the Lake Meade area and saw its fingerlike lakes vivid green against the pale desert colors. At Cedar City, we met our Utah Park tour guide and drove directly to Zion through startling red, black and yellow mountains, much like the Dolomites of northern Italy.

Around Zion, the salmon pink stone and rich green vegetation of the Kolob area remind one of the disarrayed color of a shattered watermelon. Here one dispairs trying to take photos because everything is so close upon you that even the wide angle lense will not take enough to make a picture. One becomes engrossed in the odd patterns, the texture of rock surfaces, the sweep of curved against jagged lines and the mosaics of color made by

light and shadow. Nature went mad when it formed Zion. Willis Lee, a nature lecturer, noticed this confusion in nature at Zion when he said - "In a sense, Zion resembles a museum where so many unusual objects are crowded together, that the mind is bewildered and the eye tires." The very hurried trip the Utah Park buses take does not do justice to this area.

The drive to Bryce through Zion Park was beautiful with its fantastic formations and erosion patterns. Much of this drive was between red rock canyons with cliffs rising from one to two thousand feet high on each side and very little vegetation of any kind. Pink cliffs were streaked with white, and white ones with black. There were sculptured arches, caves and alcoves and the oddest of all was the checkerboard Mesa. Before one gets to Bryce proper, we went through a bright orange-red canyon that was breathtaking.

At Bryce, one is eight to nine thousand feet above sea level and before you and below you, as you stand on the rim of the Paunsaugant Plateau, lies a city of stone, cathedrals, spires, and windowed walls; structures of countless shapes and sizes, delicately tinted in shades of pink, red, orange and softened further by splashes of grey, whites and creams; all sculptured by the never lagging forces of erosion. These are the pink cliffs of Bryce Canyon.

Cedar Breaks was a let down after Zion and Bryce and had I the chance to wander over the high (10,000 feet) plateau to photograph the profusion of wild flowers, I would have been happier. This was on our way back to Cedar City to fly to Salt Lake for a night to take another plane on to Moab, where we were to meet Charles, Jane and Jeffrey Bockman. Their happy faces met us at the airport and the next six days they drove us through some of the most exciting parts of southeastern Utah, all about Moab, and down as far

south as Monument Valley. Truly this was the peak of our trip, scenic-wise and most especially for their delightful company. Lewis and Clark could not have been better travel mates. At one point, Jane became too adventurous and got blisters on every joint of both feet - 10 toes and 2 heels.

One's imagination can run completely wild in Arches National Monument, near Moab, Utah; viewing the Entrada Sandstone immense figurines which appear as elephants, gossips, balanced rocks, faces of every description and many (over 90) graceful arches. These have been created by the erosion of water and wind removing the loose sand, smoothing their contours and leaving the graceful arches.

The high spot of Canyonlands was the Dead Horse State Park, a gorgeous overlook of a river, the meandering Colorado, reluctant to loose its freedom to the sea. The Park on a high promontory, 6000 ft. above sea level, overlooks the river 200 feet below where it slowly but surely meanders its way to the Gulf of California, 1400 miles away. This was truly one of the most beautiful spots on our trip. It is a Miniature Grand Canyon, one that could be seen in a single viewing.

From Moab, we headed south through Monticello and Blanding and made a short stop at Bluff, Utah where I have a friend from my Idaho days, Atla Elmer, who has worked at St. Christopher Mission on the Indian Reservation since 1962. We had lunch together and met all of her friends and cohorts who are an amazing group to find in such a desolate community. Bluff, a very early Mormon town, was abandoned long ago. Jane and Bentley became infatuated with the early houses and Mr. Eugene Foushee, one of Alta's friends is restoring one. He is a geologist, runs a local Motel, and does this

as a side line and an investment. A local character in Bluff said that their greatest excitement was listening to the ice box go on and off at night.

From Bluff, we went on to Monument Valley, which really would be called Paradise Valley if Jane had her way, and after two days there we heartily agree with her. Much like the Canyon, there is a hypnotic silence about the area that is very compelling. No doubt about it, Monument Valley is a gem of nature's creativeness. It is dotted with red sandstone monoliths, pinnacles, turrets, buttes and mesas rising to towering heights from 1100 to 2000 feet above the blue-green valley floor. There is a feeling of timelessness and beauty which corresponds to ancient Egyptian carvings and Grecian ruins. The Valley is unique in every way and fortunately it does not as yet have the millions of visitors that infest the other Parks. Sunrises here were an event that brought even the sleepest owl to the front veranda with a camera.

We returned to Moab to fly again to Salt Lake to get a plane to Helena the next morning; puddle jumping to Pocatella, Idaho Falls, Yellowstone, Butte and finally into Helena, over mountain ranges where the air was bumpy and the plane fluttering like a playful butterfly. Brother Jack met us at the airport and we went directly to my summer cabin in the pines near Lincoln.

Lincoln was once a great pleasure to visit as it was the scene of most of my ancestors. Now few are left, family or friends. Those that are, are old timers now and are very special to me. Rhoda and Tom, Mary and Leonard, Daisy and Elsie, all in their late 70's or middle 80's. And Alice Sherlock, a Montana teacher for over 50 years, recently retired on her 70th birthday made our visit to Lincoln a total pleasure. These are the folks that were there when I grew up so there is a great gap in memories with my younger relatives, nephews and grand nephews. When I speak of retirement to Lincoln in the future - don't take me too seriously.

I have always been drawn back to this valley of my youth because of memories of my father and his Uncles who were very early settlers. The uncles arrived with the gold-rush. Montana's territorial Governor, Stevens, in 1855 described the early townsite - "We were three hundred feet above the level of the river. On both sides of the hill was the clear, rapid stream, beyond was the foliage of the trees growing in the bottom. The tops looked like a green, rich carpet. Further on were wide prairies, all surrounded by the high ridge of beautiful hills, altogether forming a scene of surpassing beauty."

For reading on the trip, I took a book highly recommended by my friend Mary Gehr Ray - "A Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold. It is a most beautiful, heart-warming book on nature and Leopold was one of the fore runners of ecology and conservation in Wisconsin.

Especially in Montana where industry is devastating and "improving" the land for its own gain one becomes aware of the dreadful things that are happening to our wonderful land. The forests are being mowed down and left in piles of rubbish, paper mills are polluting the streams and the air, mining interests turnover the gulches and leave great mountains of undersurface rocks exposed, and tourists leave a trail of beer cans and trash alongside our excellent roads. In Dr. Leopold's own words - "The wilderness is a resource which can shrink but not grow." The sooner we begin to realize this the better, before all that nature has so generously given us is destroyed.

Again in closing, Aldo Leopold's words - "The shallow minded modern who has lost his rootage in the land assumes that he has already discovered what is important; it is such who prate of empires, political or economic, that will last a thousand years. It is only the scholar

who appreciated that all history consists of successive excursions from a single starting point, to which man returns again and again to organize yet another search for a durable scale of values. It is only the scholar who understands why the raw wilderness gives definition and meaning to the human enterprise."

After 29 days of travel, we depart from Helena (city of the Golden Glow), past Toston (sunflowers and goldenrod alongside the roadsides), Miles City (Canadian Geese along the Yellowstone), Pompei's Pillar (badlands), Wibaux (Teddy Roosevelt's one-time ranch), Spiritwood (birds flocking for autumn), Oriska (Moonlight), Wayzata (dawn), Winona (maples and sumac coloring), Potosi (cranes wading in the swamps), Shabbona (fields of drying corn and giant ragweed), Chicago (dying elms). Home (my own bed).